The

THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Leonard Kleinfeld, Forest Hills, New York, President; Robert Needham, Concord, Mass., Vice-President; and Walter Harding, State University, Geneseo, N.Y. 14454, Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership $2.00; life membership, $50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

BULLETIN ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN FALL 1971

THE FIRST YEAR'S SALES OF THOREAU'S WALDEN

by Walter Harding

Amongst the great mass of the official records of Ticknor & Fields, the mid-nineteenth century Boston publishers, and their successors that have been deposited in the Houghton Library of Harvard University at Cambridge, Massachusetts, by the Houghton Mifflin Company, the lineal descendants of Ticknor & Fields, are the apparently hitherto unnoticed records of the early sales of Henry David Thoreau's Walden. These records are interspersed with the records of the sales of other Ticknor & Fields books of the time in a volume labeled "Vol. 1 Journals 1853-55" (Houghton Library call number FMS Am 1185.11). These records give the date of purchase, the name of the purchaser, the number of copies purchased, the title of the book, the discount rate applied (though this is not always given), and the total cost charged. The great majority of purchasers were of course retailers who are purchasing at a discount, but occasionally apparently individuals ordered books directly from the publisher and their names are recorded too. The records thus give an interesting insight into the popularity of the book, its rate of sale, and even its geographical distribution.

With the permission of the Houghton Library and the Houghton Mifflin Company, descendants of the firm of Ticknor & Fields, I reproduce herewith the sales records for Walden for its first year of sale and follow it with an alphabetical identification of the purchasers. As with most such handwritten records of the mid-nineteenth century, the penmanship is often deplorable and the records themselves often inconsistent. I have transcribed them here as accurately as I could, occasionally inserting a bracketed question mark when I could not be certain that I had deciphered the handwriting correctly. Walden, incidentally, was officially published by Ticknor & Fields on August 9, 1854. For the convenience of the reader I have occasionally slightly regularized the format, punctuation, and capitalization.

SALES RECORDS

DATE		PURCHASER	NUMBER		DISC.	COST
1854						
Aug.	1	W. R. Alger	1	Walden		1.00
	2	F. W. Kellog	1	"		1.00
	3	H. Woodman	1	"		1.00
	4	Geo. B. Jones	1	"		1.00
	5	Mercantile Library	2	"		1.33
		T. Atkinson	1	"		1.00
	7	T. B. Peterson	25	"	1/3	16.67
		J. B. Cooke & Co.	1	"		.67
		O. A. Roorbach	104/100	"		66.67
		S. W. Whitaker	4	"		3.00
		J. S. Homans	5	"		3.33
		A. P. Pfisser [?]	6	"		4.50
		J. W. Randolph	3	"		2.25
		B. M. Norman	6	"		4.50
		J. C. King	1	"		1.00
		W. S. Martien	5	"		3.33
	8	Phillips, Sampson & Co.	25	"	1/3	16.67
		J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
		Gray, Sprague & Co.	5	"		3.75
		T. Kinney [?]	5	"		3.33
		Crosby, Nichols & Co.	6	"	1/4	4.50
		W. C. Little & Co.	3	"	1/4	2.25
		Miller, Orton & Co.	12	"	1/3	8.00
		H. Whipple & Son	3	"	1/4	2.25
		Merriam Chapin & Co.	5	"	1/4	3.75
		E. T. Pease & Co.	5	"	[?]	3.56
		Merrill & Straw	3	"	[?]	2.25
		I. S. Bailey	10	"	1/3	6.64
		E. Livermore	5	"	1/4	3.75
		Vickery & Griffiths	6	"	1/4	4.50
		W. Channing	1	"		1.00
		W. P. [?] Tewksbury	3	"	1/4	2.25
		Fetridge & Co.	25	"	3	17.50
		J. P. Jewett & Co.	25	"	1/3	16.67
		Fessenden & Co. [?]	3	"		2.25
		Burnham & Bro.	25	"	1/4	18.75
		H. Parker	6	"	1/4	4.50
		B. B. Muzzey & Co.	25	"	1/3	16.67
		Crocker & Brewster	2	"	1/4	1.50
		Reading & Co.	25	"	3	17.50
	9	Truman [?] & Spofford	20	"	1/3	13.33
		W. V. Spencer	25	"	3	17.50
		C. A. Hewins	1	"		1.00
		J. Keith & Co.	10	"	1/4	7.50
	10	G. W. Briggs	25	"	5%[?]	16.63
		J. Munroe & Co.	1	"		.75
		H. W. Longfellow	1	"		1.00
		Geo. H. Whitney	5	"		3.75
	11	G. H. Whitney	8	"	1/4	6.00
		J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
	12	Little Brown & Co.	1	"		.75
		Fessenden & Co. [?]	2	"		1.50
		J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
		Geo. A. Parker	1	"		1.00
		T. W. Higginson	2	"		2.00
	14	T. H. Pease	5	"	1/4 5%	3.56
		Burnham & Bro.	2	"	1/5	1.60
	16	J. P. Jewett & Co.	25	"		16.67
		Phillips, Sampson & Co.	25	"		16.67
		Geo. J. Furness	1	"		1.00
	17	J. Fessenden & Co. [?]	20	"	3	14.00
		A. [?] Burley	6	"	30	4.20
	19	B. B. Muzzey & Co.	25	"	1/3	16.67
	21	O. W. Holmes	1	"		1.00

	22	J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
	23	Gould & Lincoln	1	"		.75
		Burnham & Bros.	2	"		1.60
		Geo. Winslow	1	"		1.00
	24	J. Munroe & Co.	1	"		.75
		Redding & Co.	6	"		4.50
	25	J. M. Cooper & Co.	5	"		3.33
	26	J. Burnett	1	"		.75
	31	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	2	"		1.40
Sept.	1	Brown Bazin & Co.	1	"		.75
		F. Haven	1	"		1.00
		Jno. Armour	6	"		4.00
	2	Boston Library	1	"		.83
		Miss Davis	1	"		1.00
		J. G. King	1	"		1.00
	4	C. Morse	5	"	1/3	3.33
		S. P. Elwood & Co.	3	"	1/4	2.25
	5	J. Munroe & Co.	3	"		2.25
		B. B. Muzzey & Co.	13	"	30	9.10
	6	E. Dwight	1	"		1.00
	7	B. B. Muzzey & Co.	1	Merrimac		.75
		W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	Walden		.70
		Crosby Nichols & Co.	2	"		1.50
	8	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	"		.70
	9	F. Alger	1	"		1.00
		J. Munroe & Co.	3	"		2.25
	12	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	"		.70
	20	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	"		.70
		J. P. Jewett & Co.	1	"		.75
		Crosby, Nichols & Co.	3	"		2.25
	23	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	"		.70
		Canton Library	1	"		.75
		J. P. Jewett	2	"		1.50
	28	C. Simpson	1	"		.75
Oct.	6	I. S. Bailey	4	"		2.67
	7	W. J. Reynolds & Co.	1	"		.70
	10	J. M. Dewey	3	"	1/4	2.25
	16	Crosby Nichols & Co.	2	"	1/4	1.50
		J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
	18	Brown Bazin & Co.	1	"		.75
	21	J. Munroe & Co.	2	"		1.50
		Burnham & Bro.	3	"		2.40
Nov.	10	Tappan & Whittemore	2	"		1.50
	11	Ide & Dutton	1	"		.75
	27	Tappan & Whittemore	1	"		.75
	28	B. B. Muzzey & Co.	1	"		.70
Dec.	7	B. B. Muzzey & Co.	1	"		.70
	18	Crosby Nichols & Co.	1	"		.75
	22	J.Munroe & Co.	3	"		2.25
	25	Brown Bazin & Co.	1	"		.75
1855						
Jan.	17	A. Fetridge & Co.	2	"		1.50
Feb.	1	Phillips Sampson & Co.	3	"		2.10
	17	Gould & Lincoln	1	"		.75
	21	Sanborn, Carter & Bazin	1	"		.70
March	10	Burnham [&] Bros.	2	"		1.60
	12	Sanborn, Carter & Bazin	1	"		.70
	15	R. W. Hooper	1	"	cf	2.25
	24	Brown Bazin & Co.	1	"		.75

[Records for period from April 1, 1855 to June 29, 1855 missing]

July	10	James W. Crawford, St. Louis	1	"		.63
	13	Phillips Sampson & Co.	2	"	1.00	2.00
	16	Phillips Sampson & Co.	A Week on the Concord River		1.00	1.00

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF PURCHASERS WITH IDENTIFICATIONS.

(I have identified as "booksellers" here firms that were also stationers, printers, or publishers.)

Alger, F. Possibly the F. Alger who edited Phillips' Mineralogy for Ticknor & Fields in 1843.

Alger, W. R. A Unitarian clergyman in Boston. Ironically this first purchaser of Walden later in Solitudes of Nature and of Man (Boston, 1866) wrote a strong denunciation of Thoreau.

Armour, Jno. I have been unable to identify this name, but the discount received indicates that he is a bookseller.

Atkinson, T. A Theodore Atkinson lived at 7 Doane St. in Boston at this time and a Thomas Atkinson at 30 Charles St.

Bailey, I. S. A Portland, Maine, bookseller.

Boston Library. Probably the Boston Public Library.

Briggs, G. W. A Boston bookseller.

Brown Bazin & Co. A Boston bookseller.

Burley, A [?]. I have been unable to identify this name, but the discount received indicates that he is a bookseller.

Burnham & Bros. A Boston bookseller.

Canton Library. Probably the public library in Canton, Mass., where Thoreau did a short stint of teaching while he was a student at Harvard.

Channing, W. Could be W. Ellery Channing the poet, friend and biographer of Thoreau; or Walter Channing, Ellery's father; or William Henry Channing, Ellery's cousin, the Unitarian clergyman.

Cooke, J. B. & Co. Is this by any chance W. B. Cooke & Co., a San Francisco bookseller?

Cooper, J. M. & Co. A Savannah, Georgia, bookseller.

Crawford, James W. A St. Louis, Missouri, bookseller. Thoreau's friend Bronson Alcott had a number of admirers in St. Louis and probably one of these ordered the book.

Crocker & Brewster. A Boston bookseller.

Crosby, Nichols & Co. A Boston bookseller.

Davis, Miss. Too vague for identification.

Dewey, J. M. Possibly D. M. Dewey, a Rochester, New York, bookseller.

Dwight, E. Probably Elizabeth Dwight who later married Thoreau's friend James Elliot Cabot.

Elwood, S. P. & Co. I have been unable to identify this bookseller.

Fessenden, J. & Co. [?] Probably the Brattleboro, Vermont, bookseller, though the handwriting of the name is not clear in any case.

Fetridge, A. & Co. A Boston bookseller.

Furness, Geo. J. He resided at 5 Liberty Square in Boston. Whether he was related to Emerson's friend William Henry Furness is not known.

Gould & Lincoln. A Boston bookseller.

Gray, Sprague & Co. An Albany, New York, bookseller.

Haven, F. Is this possibly the Samuel Foster Haven, librarian of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester?

Hewins, C. A. Charles A. Hewins resided at 129 Washington Street, West Roxbury, Mass.

Higginson, T. W. The Transcendentalist author and Unitarian clergyman who was one of Thoreau's earliest admirers.

Holmes, O. W. The poet and physician who never was able to arouse much enthusiasm for Thoreau and later described him as that "nullifier of civilization, who insisted on nibbling his asparagus at the wrong end."

Homans, S. S. A New York City bookseller.

Hooper, R. W. Robert W. Hooper was a physician who lived at 44 Summer Street, Boston. Note that the $2.25 he paid includes charges c[arried] f[orward]" from a previous bill.

Ide & Dutton. A Boston bookseller

Jewett, J. P. & Co. A Boston bookseller.
Jones, Geo. B. I have been unable to identify this person.
Keith, J. & Co. A Worcester, Mass., bookseller. Thoreau had a circle of admirers in Worcester, among them H. G. O. Blake and Theo. Brown.
Kellog, F. W. I have been unable to identify this person.
King, J. G. A Boston lawyer who sometimes sponsored Emerson's lectures in that city.
Kinney [?], T. I have been unable to identify this bookseller.
Little Brown & Co. The Boston bookseller and publisher.
Little, W. C. & Co. An Albany, New York, bookseller.
Livermore, E. A New York City bookseller.
Longfellow, H. W. The Cambridge poet had been one of Thoreau's teachers at Harvard.
Martien, W. S. A Philadelphia bookseller.
Mercantile Library. The New York City subscription Library. In 1843 when Thoreau was living on Staten Island, he obtained a "perpetual stranger's ticket to the library through his former Harvard tutor H. S. McKean, then the librarian.
Merriam Chapin & Co. A Springfield, Mass., bookseller
Merrill & Straw. Lowell, Mass., booksellers.
Miller, Orton & Co. A New York City bookseller.
Morse, C. Probably either Charles M. Morse, a Boston bookseller, or Charles E. Morse, a Cambridge, Mass., bookseller.
Munroe, J. & Co. The Boston bookseller that had published Thoreau's first book, A Week, that had been such a financial failure. It is interesting to note apparently not wanting to get stuck a second time with a Thoreau book that they never ordered more than three copies of Walden at a time, though they were forced to re-order ten times before the year was up.
Muzzey, B. B. & Co. A Boston bookseller.
Norman, B. M. A New Orleans bookseller.
Parker, Geo. A. A student by this name was attending the law school at Harvard at this time.
Parker, H. Probably S. H. Parker, a Boston bookseller.
Pease, E. T. Possibly E. T. Pease & Co., a Hartford, Conn., bookseller.
Pease, T. B. Possibly a member of the above firm.
Peterson, T. B. A Philadelphia bookseller.
Pfisser [?], A. P. I have been unable to identify this dealer, though because the handwriting is difficult, I may not have read the name correctly.
Phillips, Sampson & Co. A Boston bookseller.
Randolph, J. W. A Richmond, Virginia, bookseller.
Reading & Co. A Boston bookseller.
Redding & Co. Probably a misspelling of the above.
Reynolds, W. J. & Co. A Boston bookseller.
Roorbach, O. A. The well-known New York City bookseller and bibliographer. Their order for 104 copies is the largest Walden received.
Sanborn, Carter & Bazin. A Boston bookseller.
Simpson, C. Possibly C. Stimpson, a Boston bookseller.
Spencer, W. V. A Boston bookseller.
Tappan & Whittemore. A Boston bookseller.
Tewksbury, W. T. Probably W. P. Tewksbury, a Boston bookseller.
[Truman?] & Spofford. Probably a Cincinnati bookseller, though the first name is almost illegible.
Vickery & Griffiths. I have been unable to identify this bookseller.
Whipple, H. & Son. A Salem, Mass., bookseller.
Whitaker, S. W. I have been unable to identify this bookseller.
Whitney, Geo H. A Providence, Rhode Island, bookseller.
Winslow, Geo. A George Winslow resided at 114 State St., Boston, Mass.
Woodman, H. Probably Horatio Woodman, a Boston lawyer and friend of Emerson.

Totalling up these sales, we find that in the first year (excepting the months of April, May, and June, 1855, for which the records have disappeared), Ticknor & Fields sold 738 copies of Walden out of a printing of two thousand copies. It should be noted that I have also included their occasional sales of Thoreau's first book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, which had been published by J. Munroe & Co. of Boston in 1849, but who had returned their unsold copies to Thoreau in 1853. After the publication of Walden, Thoreau made arrangements with his new publisher to carry a few copies of the first book in stock to sell as the occasion demanded. In the first year they thus sold two copies!

SALES BY CITIES

If we tabulate the sales of Walden to booksellers, we make some interesting discoveries: Boston, Mass., 399 copies; New York City, 126; Philadelphia, 30; Cincinnati, 20; Portland, Maine, 14; Providence, R.I, 13; Hartford, Conn., 10; Worcester, Mass., 10; Brattleboro, Vt., 6; Albany, N.Y., 6; New Orleans, La., 6; Savannah, Ga., 5; Springfield, Mass., 5; Rochester, N.Y., 3; Lowell, Mass., 3; Richmond, Va., 3; Salem, Mass., 3; San Francisco, Calif., 1; St. Louis, Mo., 1; Total sold to booksellers, 664. Thus we can easily see that overwhelmingly the sales were local, with more than half the copies being sold in Boston, almost two-thirds (420 copies) in New England. There is a surprise though in the fact that it was a New York City bookseller (O. A. Roorbach) that individually sold the largest number of copies (104), although this fact is in part at least explained in that Roorbach was competing with only three other bookstores, whereas in Boston there are twenty-two booksellers handling the book. Far more surprising are the number of orders from below the Mason-Dixon Line--New Orleans, Savannah, and Richmond, Virginia. The Transcendentalists in general and Thoreau in particular have been thought to have few admirers in the South, chiefly because of their outspoken position against slavery. Yet three Southern bookstores ordered multiple copies.

SALES BY MONTHS

One other tabulation is perhaps worthwhile and that is chronological. August, 1854, 629 copies; September, 55; October, 18; November, 5; December, 6; January, 1855, 2; February, 5; March, 5; April-June [No sales record]; July, 3. Thus we see that more than 80% of the first year's sales occurred in the month of publication and that after three months the sales had tapered off to an average of less than five copies a month. It was incidentally not until 1859 that the first edition of two thousand copies of Walden was exhausted. And it was not until after Thoreau's death in 1862 that Ticknor & Fields bothered with a second printing--and then of only 280 copies. But the sales of Walden since that date are quite a different story, of course--though not one to be told here

"Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts, of life are not only dispensible, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind."
--- H. D. T.

THOREAU'S THREE THOUSAND BLUETS

by Albert Foster Butler

The welcome spring and summer months bring back the bluets. This engaging little flower with a personality all its own came within the notice of Henry David Thoreau in his ramblings about Concord, and his journal provides readable evidence. The bluet (Houstonia caerulea), a member of the madder family, thrives especially well in New England, but it may be found in other parts of the country in meadows, along roadsides, and atop the hills. In the upland reaches of New Hampshire and Vermont for example it may be seen on rocky slopes where its foothold is tenuous from the thin earthlayers. Because of the charm of this flower it has been given a variety of names, as Quaker-ladies, innocence, angel-eyes, eyebright, and Venus' pride. The numerous Houstonia species perpetuate the name of the Englishman, Dr. William Houston, who did botanical research in tropical America many years ago.

Thoreau's journal contains a number of interesting references to bluets. They call attention to the fragrance which can extend to a distance of several rods; the unforgetable bluet color which is bluish-white and likely to whiten a patch of ground rather than render a blue effect; and the name of the plant from both folk and scientific sources. One of his lines talks briefly of "two kinds of bluets" which could refer to the plant's dimorphous character: some bluets have tall stamens and a short pistil, while others have a tall pistil and short stamens. The bluets with tall pistils must be fertilized by pollen from the tall stamens, and those with low pistils are fertilized by pollen from the low stamens. The smaller butterflies and the bees assist in this springtime rite of cross-pollinization.

Thoreau's journal observations on the bluet did not begin until June of 1851 when he was thirty-four, but they recurred in 1852, 1853, and reached something of a climax in May of 1860 when he had considerable to say about the beautiful bluets blooming in the yard of the old Conantum house. Without benefit of computer he estimated the number which turned out to be no small sum!

Paragraphs from Thoreau's Journal

June 14, 1851, "The houstonias still blossom freshly, as I believe they continue to do all summer."

May 6, 1852,

Houstonis (Hedyotis caerulea), bluets, now just begun. Dewey calls it Venus' pride. Gray says truly, "a very delicate little herb, . . . producing in spring a profusion of handsome bright blue blossoms fading to white, with a yellow eye." I should say bluish-white. The dwarf endromeda (A. calyculata) just begun; leaves called evergreen; flowers on "one-sided leafy racemes."

May 9, 1852, "The bluet (sometimes at least?) begins with a kind of lilac-blue, fading through white, delicately tinges with blue, to white."

May 22, 1852, "Two kinds of bluets in New York Report."

May 25, 1852, "Some call bluets innocence."

April 24, 1853,

Houstonias. How affecting that, annually at this season, as surely as the sun takes a higher course in the heavens, this pure and simple little flower peeps out and spots the great globe with white in our America, its four little white or bluish petals on a slender stalk making a delicate flower about a third of an inch in diameter! What a significant, though faint, utterance of spring through the veins of earth!

May 5, 1860,

Bluets have spotted the fields for two or three days mingled with the reddish luzula, as in Conant's field north of Holden Wood toward the brook. They fill the air with a sweet and innocent fragrance at a few rods' distance.

May 13, 1860,

There are some dense beds of houstonia in the yard of the old Conantum house. Some parts of them show of a distinctly bluer shade two rods off. They are most interesting now, before many other flowers are out, the grass high, and they have lost their freshness. I sit down by one dense bed of them to examine it. It is about three feet long and two or more wide. The flowers not only crowd one another, and completely hide the ground, - a mass of white. Counting those in a small place, I find that there are about three thousand flowers in a square foot. They are all turned a little toward the sun, and emit a refreshing odor. Here is a lumbering humblebee, probing these tiny flowers. It is a rather ludicrous sight. Of course they will not support him, except a little where they are densest; so he bends them down rapidly (hauling them in with his arms, as it were), one after another, thrusting his beak into the tube of each. It takes him but a moment to dispatch one. It is a singular sight, a humblebee clambering over a bed of these delicate flowers. There are various other bees about them.

May 7, 1860,

I saw bluets whitening the fields yesterday a quarter of a mile off. They are to the sere brown grass what the shad-bush is now to the brown and bare sproutlands or young woods.

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After reading Thoreau's expressive journal notes on the bluet you may say to yourself, "Why, we have bluets or similar flowers right here in our own backyard," and you're probably right; because the bluet seems to adapt to variations in climate, soil, and terrain. Numerous species are native to North America.

The bluet of Thoreau's journal is Houstonia caerulea - common bluet. It has four-parted bluish flowers and tufted stems; three to eight inches high. Blooms April until frost, but especially lovely in May. The delicate flowers have an "enamel-like" appearance and a yellow eye. A wayside plant, it frequents open woods, clearings, fields, and meadows; eastern half of North America. It is cross-fertilized by bees and smaller butterflies, as the clouded sulphur, meadow fritillary, and painted lady.

"Men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, . . . they had better aim at something high."--WALDEN

AN ECHO OF VIRGIL IN WALDEN -- by Richard Tuerk

In the chapter entitled "Friday" in his first book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Thoreau declares: "Here or nowhere is our heaven."[1] Shortly after he makes this statement, he writes:

There have been heroes for whom this world seemed expressly prepared, as if creation had at last succeeded; whose daily life was the

stuff of which dreams are made, and whose presence enhanced the beauty and ampleness of Nature herself. Where they walked,--

"Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
Purpureo: Solemque suum, sua sidera norunt."
"Here a more copious air invests the fields, and clothes with purple light; and they know their own sun and their own stars." (I.406)

Significantly, this passage comes from the Aeneid, book VI, lines 640-641. Here Virgil describes not "this world" in which we live but the Elysian fields as they appear when Aeneas first enters them. By using Virgil's description of the underworld to describe the effect of heroes on this world, Thoreau reinforces his point that our heaven is here on earth if only we are willing to obtain it.

In Walden in the chapter entitled "Solitude," when discussing his own isolated location beside the pond, he echoes his translation of Virgil's lines. Here he writes: "I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world all to myself" (II.144). This echo reinforces an idea that runs throughout Walden, namely, that when he was living alone beside the pond, Thoreau was able to experience what he calls (in "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For") "a poetic or divine life" (II.100). Because of his mode of living, during rare moments he could enjoy heaven on earth. Thus, as is characteristic of him, in both A Week and Walden Thoreau takes other worldly notions and applies them to "this world." In so doing, he translates "this world" into a potentially divine realm in which blessed heroes can dwell. Perhaps even more important, in these passages from A Week and Walden Thoreau uses his echoes from Virgil in order to emphasize the need for each man to make the earth on which he dwells into a heaven. He exhorts each man to become the kind of hero he describes in the passage from A Week; and in Walden his echo of Virgil lets us know that he indeed, at times, considered himself to be the kind of hero who creates his own heaven.

[1]All quotations are from The Writings of Henry David Thoreau (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1906). Page and volume numbers are given in parentheses in my text.

University of California, Riverside

"If you are restricted in your range by poverty . . . it is life near the bone where it is sweetest."--WALDEN

THOREAU IN B. O. FLOWER'S ARENA -- Paul P. Reuben

Benjamin Orange Flower was as much a propagandist and reviver of New England Transcendentalism as he was the "Patron of the Realists" and the "Father of the Muckrakers."[1] He staked the reputation and survival of his infant magazine by advocating liberal causes such as women's rights, racial equality and Transcendental idealism. Flower was the chief editor of the Arena, a Boston magazine, whose monthly issues began in December, 1889, and continued in regular publication till the middle of 1909.

Editor Flower deserves credit for recognizing, long before many, the true greatness and contribution of Henry David Thoreau. In an article called "A Golden Day in Boston's History," Flower said: "Our people have not yet recognized the essential greatness or sanity of Henry Thoreau. In him the human element was far stronger than the world imagines, and he intuitively recognized the great fact, which we are only beginning to appreciate, that the safety and sanity of civilization demand the return to the heart of nature."[2] The conditions of society which disillusioned Thoreau were similar to those in Flower's time. The editor talked of the madness of millions bitten by gold, and the artificiality and superficiality of urban life that hampered normal growth, originality, and great works. Thoreau saw through the superficiality, rejected it, and turned towards Walden Pond. He saw the need to get closer to the elements of nature, to forget the anguish of an industrial society and to live fully, according to the dictates of his intuition. Flower saw Thoreau's message as aptly relevant to the early years of the twentieth century - a time when the basics of human nature and individuality were threatened in the name of industrial progress.

Apart from references by Flower, a full-length article by Walter Leighton called "Henry Thoreau - An Estimate," appeared in the November 1903 issue of the Arena. Leighton sketched the highlights of Thoreau's life and found that his appeal lay in his structuring his life according to the promptings of his genius and the circumstances of his environment. There was virtue too in Thoreau's confident challenge to the complexity of civilization, particularly in reference to the latter's effect on the formation and development of human character. Assessing Thoreau's beliefs, Leighton picked out the most relevant and understandable one, which was that happiness came from within. To realize this kind of happiness one had to elevate himself from the baser life of physicality and transcend to a realm where intuition became the guide.

Leighton pointed out that Thoreau's desire was not to attain knowledge in particular, but to develop sympathy with intelligence in general. Thoreau's affinity for the mystical philosophies of the East are mentioned in passing. For Leighton, Thoreau's weakness was his repeated insistence on a life totally structured by one's whims and beliefs. But one cannot live for himself entirely. An individual, Leighton voiced the mood of the time, cannot almost altogether detach himself from the society of his fellows. Although Thoreau appeared iconoclastic, he helped to fix his reader's attention on the good in life and nature, on the highest and the best. In the midst of materialism of modern civilization, he was a wholesome reactionary, or a counter-balancing force. A highly civilized and complex life, concluded Leighton, tended in time to become debilitated and degenerated; and, "when we feel ourselves debilitated and degenerated by it, we would do well to chasten and invigorate ourselves by reading what Thoreau has written. We need not swing so far in a recalcitrant direction as he did. But we might to advantage follow him part way, adopt the golden mean course."[3]

Thoreau started rising in the critical esteem of the readers with the beginning of the twentieth century. Credit should go to Benjamin Flower for prophesying the remarkable influence of Thoreau in the present century. In the Arena we hear the faint echoes of that Thoreauvian appreciation, which was later to match that of Emerson.

[1]David H. Dickason, "Benjamin Orange Flower; Patron of the Realists," American Literature, XIV (Mar. 1942), 148-156: and Roy P. Fairfield, "Benjamin Orange Flower: Father of the Muckrakers," American Literature, XXII (Nov. 1950), 272-282.

[2]B. O. Flower, "A Golden Day in Boston's History," Arena, XXXII (Aug. 1904), 151.

[3]Arena, XXX (Nov. 1903), 497.

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"Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth." -- WALDEN

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"There is no just and serene criticism as yet. Nothing is considered simply as it lies in the lap of eternal beauty, but our thoughts, as well as our bodies, must be dressed after the latest fashions."--A WEEK.

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

The Current Co., 17 Burnside St., Bristol, R.I., 02809, has just issued a book catalog listing more than forty Thoreau items including a first of A WEEK with the missing lines written in by Thoreau, a presentation copy of EXCURSIONS from Mrs. Thoreau to Sanborn, a MS letter from Greeley to Thoreau, and a letter from Blake about the publication of Thoreau's journal.

The Thoreau Lyceum in Concord is offering a series of colorful blockprints of quotations from Thoreau at $4.00 each.

Cadlyn's (Huntington Station, N.Y.) offer a charming illuminated wall plaque of the "different drummer" quotation for $1.98.

WGBH, the Boston TV station, produced a program entitled "Mister Thoreau Takes a Trip: A Week on the Concord and Merrimack." (Incidentally both National Educational Television and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. are at work on television programs on Thoreau.)

Cahan Wilson, in one of a series of ecology cartoons in the Sept. 1971 AUDUBON MAGAZINE included one of an atrocious city street corner featuring a bronze plaque labeled "Site of the hut where Henry David Thoreau wrote Walden Pond" [sic].

Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller of Concord, Mass. has recently discovered the name of one Sebastian Thoreau in the baptismal records of the Church of Ste. Catherine in Orleans, France, for 1651. Could it be a distant ancester of HDT?

Leonard Kleinfeld has announced the following to be the members of the 1972 Thoreau Society nominating committee: Pauline Kohlrausch, Carlisle, Mass.; Isaac Oelgart, 28 Milk St., Newburyport, Mass.; and Roland Robbins, R.D.2, Lincoln, Mass. Suggestions for nominations may be forwarded to any member of the committee.

Can anyone give us any publication details of a short story by Joyce Carol Oates entitled "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" satirizing Thoreau?

The University of Pittsburgh celebrated "Thoreau Week" from October 11-15, 1971. Featured was an exhibition of books and other materials from the Thoreau collection of Leonard Kleinfeld. Speakers were Mr. Kleinfeld, Stanley Cavell, Thomas Philbrick, and Walter Harding. The exhibition will remain on display through December.

Another over-looked life reference to Thoreau--this time in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at the Annual Meetings Held in 1854, 1855, & 1856, where in the "annual statement" for 1855 it describes the anti-slavery meeting held in Framingham, Mass., on July 4, 1854, at which Thoreau delivered his "Slavery in Massachusetts":

> **The two Special Meetings of the Society, held on the Fourth of July, at the Grove in Framingham, and on the First of August, in the Grove in Abington, were most numerously attended, and most happy in their effects. The utterances at both were, as the times required, of the boldest and most searching character, as the reports of them, made at the time, testify; but bold and thorough as they were, they were entirely sustained by the judgment and sympathies of the numerous hearers which had thronged together from far and near, to hear and participate. In addition to the speakers whose names have become more familiar to Anti-Slavery ears and hearts, we had the pleasure, on the Fourth of July, to welcome HENRY D. THOREAU to the public advocacy of our cause; while at Abington, we had the hearty support of Rev. Messrs. STETSON, HIGGINSON, and DALL.**

"I thrive best on solitude." -- JOURNAL

MORE DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON THOREAU.

With the permission of the University of Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Mich., we continue printing herewith reproductions of abstracts of dissertations on Thoreau. The full dissertations are available from University Microfilms at the prices given at the ends of the abstracts:

A CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY
OF THE POETRY OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

(Order No. 67-4081)

Donovan LeRoy Welch, Ph.D.
The University of Nebraska, 1966

Adviser: Christos E. Pulos

This study traces Thoreau's development as a poet. A chronological approach to his verse enables one to evaluate the poetry esthetically and to study the evolution of his themes, imagery, rhythms, forms, and poetic theory. His poetic theories are particularly valuable keys to his intentions, for they disclose to what degree he was able to incorporate them into his verses. A minor assumption is a significant factor in the analyses of some poems. Since rhythms, imagery, and forms are a revelation of thought and temperament, prosodic analyses illustrate in new ways some established ideas in Thoreauvian scholarship.

Thoreau's college poems reveal a sensitive young man exploring the zenith and nadir of his emotions in poetic forms and diction derived from the metaphysical poets and the nature poets of the eighteenth century. In 1837-1838, feeling in excelsis, that rare blessing of madness, became the cornerstone of his poetry and his poetic theory. Transcendental definitions of such words as friendship characterized his poetry of 1839-1840. By 1841-1842, Thoreau's growing powers of discrimination caused him to become a less spontaneous, more reflective poet. A loss of innocence forced him, directly or indirectly, to modify his poetic theory of impulse, demand a life of solitude, and prefer life over art. The next period, 1843-1844, was a period of expanding consciousness in which the Transcendental theories of creation and perception appeared in his verse. A gradual disenchantment with his muse of poetry occurred from 1845-1857. Few new ideas appeared in his verse, and although his poems frequently sank into prose, a new note of humility emerged.

A study of Thoreau's rhythms reveals that he rarely deviated from his practice of writing transcendental arguments in conventional meters. But by using stressed rather that metrical rhythms in his Orphic poems, he not only achieved his most notable accomplishment in poetic music; he also employed rhythms which were architectural outgrowths of his own demands. His images were extended after the manner of the metaphysical poets or pyramided in the tradition of the Transcendental poets. Those poems in which he used both imagistic techniques are generally unsuccessful. For one who wrote so persuasively about the doctrine of organic form, Thoreau rarely used this poetic principle in his own verses. Only in the Orphic poems and possibly one or two others did he fulfill his theory of organicism.

A chronological study of Thoreau's verse reveals his poetry to be the chrysalid stage in his evolution as a writer, for his rebellion in poetry consisted primarily of infusing transcendental themes into his verses. He described the poet as a seer, the temperament of the poet as divine passivity, the function of the poet as a namer, and the genesis of the poem as organic; but he did not realize those poetic principles in his own verses. His poems contain common sense and severe truth, but they lack a feature inherent in his best prose--beauty.

Microfilm $3.00; Xerography $8.20. 178 pages.

METAPHORS IN WALDEN.

(Order No. 68-10,510)

Howard Rogers Houston, Ph.D.
Claremont Graduate School and
University Center, 1967

Supervisor: Edwin S. Fussell

Neither the form of Walden--its firm structure and fine texture--nor its full meaning can be understood without giving attention to its metaphors in all their variations and permutations. The pattern of withdrawal and return, and of natural cycles--the year and the day--structure the total narrative, as well as certain individual chapters, and support the encompassing theme of periodic rebirth. Other aspects of Thoreau's argument are similarly developed through metaphoric patterns.

In criticizing society, Thoreau adapts such satiric conventions as vignettes, catalogs of objects, and insect and animal metaphors to the American scene. "Desperation" discusses metaphors of entrapment, bondage, blindness, suffocation, disease, sleep, and death, which characterize the plight of the individual; and metaphors of false and flimsy surfaces, accumulated trash, ruts and quagmires, obscuring clouds and smoke, machinery, and warfare, which characterize social life. Counterpointed against these are metaphors of natural rhythms and growth--especially of plants--which stand for freedom, health, and self-culture. The dominant structural metaphors in Walden are horizontals and verticals--the horizontal plane representing everything superficial, monotonous, repetitious, and futile, and the vertical axis representing penetration, growth, and developing awareness.

"Living Deliberately" and "Morning Work" treat the symbolic aspects of Thoreau's experiment in living--his house-building and housekeeping, diet, gardening, and reading--and the rich crop of "tropes and expression" which these endeavors yield. He invests all his activities with sacramental meaning and transforms his cabin and its environs into a sacred "center" and mid-point on the vertical axis, opposed to the profane horizontal world of Concord. Metaphors and allusions drawn from the past--primitive, classical, and Oriental--stress the archetypal quality of his experience.

"Fronting Reality" deals with Thoreau's concept of growth as a continuing quest and assimilation of experience, a two-directional process like the growth of plants. Metaphors of depth, burrowing, and laying "foundations" express the effort to penetrate both outer and inner worlds; metaphors of elevation suggest the flowering of "facts" into truth and the development of intuition. Thoreau treats the senses as vehicles of outward, and as metaphors for inward, exploration. One phase of Thoreau's quest culminates in "The Center," which explores Walden Pond as a manifold symbol uniting the self, nature, and God. Metaphors of depth and height, reflections, inversions, and interaction between physical zones establish this complex identification.

Thoreau's view of nature, "Cosmic Economy," combines vertical and cyclical metaphors. He derives them in part from the traditional idea of the "great chain," with its corollaries of plenitude, continuity, and correspondence, temporalized, in the Romantic mode, to accommodate notions of evolution and continual transcendence. Even "inanimate" nature thus becomes instinct with life and at least the potentiality of thought and spirit--an expression of the divine will. Nature struggles for more perfect self-actualization through endless rebirth. Symbolic images of thawing clay and reawakening spring conclude Thoreau's narrative and thematic cycle. "Return" treats his role as evangelist and prophet of a comparable rebirth for society. Microfilm $3.15; Xerography $11.05. 243 pages.

"Let a man step to the music which he hears...."
JOURNAL, July 19, 1851

JOHN EVELYN, SIR KENELM DIGBY, AND THOREAU'S VITAL SPIRITS

by Michael West

In Walden's chapter "The Bean-Field Thoreau cites Sir Kenelm Digby as believing that the earth, lying fallow, recruits itself by attracting "vital spirits" from the air. The source of this quotation eluded the vigilance of Walter Harding in The Variorum Walden; but in a recent article, "Evelyn's Lay Fields, Digby's Vital Spirits, and Thoreau's Beans," TSB, 101 (1967), 6-7, Ted-Larry Pebworth demonstrated that while Thoreau might have derived this idea from Digby's Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants (1661), he might also have encountered it at second-hand in John Evelyn's Terra: A Philosophical Discourse of Earth (London, 1729).

Indeed, Thoreau's MS Fact-Book, now in the Widener Collection at Harvard, furnishes virtually conclusive proof that Evelyn was Thoreau's source. Entitled "Extracts, mostly upon Natural History," this notebook contains passages transcribed from Thoreau's reading during the early 1850's. Several pages are devoted to extracts seriatim from Evelyn's Terra. Among them, on p. 103 of the MS notebook, Thoreau, following Evelyn, p. 16, notes Digby's belief in vital spirits. From the same page in Evelyn Thoreau took the quotation that appears in Walden just prior to his reference to vital spirits. There is thus no reason to suppose that Thoreau's acquaintance with Digby extended to the original.

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